

//guru-s, shaken into a flat, wooden dish, tsari-s, and purified of the coarser elements by winnowing.

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The powder thus obtained is put in a tortoise-shell box, !u-ros, which is the indispensable toilet article of every woman and grown girl. The front opening of a tortoise shell is enlarged by cutting out a piece of the belly shield, the back opening is closed up with the blackened rosin of the same plant from which they make beads. [Picture. Buchu boxes. 2/3 natural size.] Sometimes the dried skin and the retracted hind legs of the animal make enough of a closure. Sometimes the back closure is a hardened pulp made from the freshly crushed saliva gland of a cow instead of with rosin. A piece of soft jackal's skin serves as the front closure and as a powder container at the same time. A leather hand strap is pulled through a hole in the belly shell.

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[829]

The men rub only their armpits and neck with buchu but the women rub their whole body except their face. [210] With it they wipe off menstrual secretions and sweat from the skin and I was not able to check the account of one Hottentot that the women also sprinkle the vulva and vagina with buchu in order to win back maidenly charms by the contracting effect of the powder.

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Sometimes, because of the pleasant odor, the women incense themselves (/is(e)n) with buchu by placing the powder on hot stones and letting the smoke penetrate their clothes. Buchu is sprinkled on the skin swaddling clothes of babies and on the shrouds of the dead, and on graves.

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To make the color of their skins more beautiful, women and girls paint (/ho/bo) their faces. The powder of a piece of clay called !naub, that is colored red by iron oxide is mixed into raw fat that has been made soft by chewing, and the salve is rubbed on the face with a finger. When the stone is lacking, iron rust is used as a substitute. The effect is that of an even brownish-red covering of the face, which even in our eyes, increases the charm of a pretty young face when it is well shaded in.

[386]

A remarkable beauty product is a dark brown sticky mass, which is at times found on the surface of rocks in layers as thick as one's finger and is called "stone sweat," *u-i aos-(e)ni (cf. Analysis in the Appendix). Little pieces are rubbed on a rock with water as though they were India ink and rubbed over the greased face. The smeary spotty distribution of this make-up is ugly.

[386]

artificially-fed creatures were given the breast on the fourth day, they were often too weak to suck greedily. 853

[222] The child is weaned by the mother rubbing the bitter juice of an aloe on her nipples. If the mother suffers because the milk is no longer being taken, she is milked a few times directly into the ashes of the hearth fire. Just as the milk fizzles away there, it is also supposed to dry up in the woman. 862 [278]

d) Childbed. Directly after delivery the woman is covered up as warmly as possible so that she will sweat. 844

Eyewitnesses reported to me a peculiar custom which is probably no longer practiced today. Several women press firmly on the hip bone of the woman who has just given birth and is still lying on her side. Sometimes this process of "hip sitting" ni-nu-thum, is done in such a way that the person performing this act, while placing her foot on the hip of the woman, takes hold of a hut pole with her arm in order to press against the woman even more firmly. The purpose of this is to press the bones together again which, according to their beliefs, were forced apart by the act of giving birth. That also explains the rule that the woman in labor must lie on her side. The bones of one side are supposed to press with their weight against those of the other side. If she were on her back, her pelvis would, as they say, spread apart.

A Hottentot woman (of the old school), does not touch water; not even after the delivery is washing attempted. A white woman wanted to place a cold wet cloth on a Hottentot woman who was bleeding severely and had fainted several times. When she took it from the water and wrung it out, the native women left the hut and made the white woman responsible for the death of the woman which they believed was unavoidable after touching her with water. 846

The new mother rests in bed until the third day and sometimes until the seventh day. Only the blanket under her is changed. To take care of her needs, the woman leaves her bed from the first day.

To help the after-pains disappear, a hot infusion is given, made from the same roasted and crushed root formations that are used in the care of navel wounds.

After the seventh day, or sometimes not until after the tenth day, the new mother usually pursues her usual activities. I have not been able to check the information of one woman [223] that menstruation begins a month after birth, even when a child is nursed. 841

In conclusion, a word about multiple births. It is not considered good luck to have twins. A case of triplets occurred in the year 1897 845 [77]

Menstruation usually begins between the thirteenth and fifteenth years. From then on it is called *//kxã/a-es(e)ni, i. e., "moon sickness," from the regularity of its recurrence. It supposedly lasts three days on the average and is scanty. [Picture. Plate XII. Topnaar Hottentot Girl.] At this time they often [297] paint their faces with a dark greasy salve. (See Care of the Body, p. 210).

Those who are menstruating are not allowed in the kraal, let alone to do the milking. It is difficult to get reliable information about the end of menstruation. I know of two women who had children when 47 years of age and of another aged 55 who still had periods. In general the appearance of the climacteric does not seem to deviate from the norm for our race.

b) Marriage, !ga-meb, is the goal which the girl seeks. I was astonished how carefully regulated customs have still been maintained in secrecy where the ethical customs have not degenerated or have not been clothed in Christian guise. Chance observations and occasional remarks of my companions gave me the clues which I had only to pursue with patience to find out the remnants of original folkways that are still well preserved under the varnish of semi-civilization.

A man who wishes to find out if a girl reciprocates his feeling of love hands the girl of his choice a little stick. If they are both in agreement, they break the little stick, each holding on to one end, and throw the broken stick towards each other's breast. The man is now the *taob of the girl, the girl the *taos of the man. They then enter into a love relationship as the word (tao = to be ashamed) indicates and as the old custom actually demands, which places on them the following duties of modesty. The betrothed may not speak to each other nor hand each other things. Anything they wish to say or give to each other must be done through an intermediary, a man or a woman. Violations are expiated by atonement presents -- they are actually love tokens and so the whole thing is a game of hide and seek that has become a fixed custom.

This can continue for months, a year, or longer before the relationship becomes closer. That can then happen in two ways; openly by asking the parents or secretly by a symbolic action which indicates the girl's agreement to complete surrender. The lover takes off a skin shoe when the two of them are alone and throws it to the girl. If she leaves the shoe unnoticed, the offer of a premature union is rejected. If she wishes to accept the proposal, she returns the shoe.

Magic is also involved in intrigues of love. An effective means of separating lovers, according to the opinion of informed [298] magicians,

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the */naras* and *tsama* are preferred most of all, on account of both the water content of the flesh and the food value of the kernel. The Topnaars in the vicinity of Walvis Bay still live for a considerable part of the year almost exclusively on the */naras*, and hence are often known by the tribal name of */Naranin*. 222
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All the food obtained is generally shared in common. If game is brought home, the whole camp gathers about the hut of the possessor till all the meat is consumed, and so too with everything else. Even to-day in South-West Africa if a Nama has anything to eat, e.g. a piece of meat or bread, he is bound by old custom to share it with anyone coming up to him. Failure to do so would expose him to the greatest contempt. The communal meal, as we shall see, is one of the outstanding features in the ceremonial life of the people; while in ordinary life their hospitality is so generous and far-reaching that their economic system has in consequence been termed by several writers a sort of communism. 264
[262]
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There is as a rule no fixed time for eating. Only the morning meal, taken after the cows have been milked and driven out to pasture, has a special name, *sobas*. The time and place of the other meals are regulated according to circumstance: in camp by the return of the herds from pasture, on the march by outspans, on the hunt by a successful shot, and so on. The preparation of meals is the task of the women, and generally each woman prepares the food for her family on the fire in the hut. Normally both men and women now eat together, each family by itself, but there are certain communal meals in which the sexes are strictly separated or in which only the members of one sex may take part. According to Kolb, however, men and women among the Cape Hottentots always ate apart, all the people of each sex eating together. This separation of the sexes at meals he attributes to the fear that one of the women might be menstruating, and would thus contaminate any men associating with her or coming near her.¹ There is evidence also, as we shall see in discussing the boys' puberty ceremonies, that among the Naman the men at least formerly ate together and apart from their wives. [462]
[184]
[84] ●
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There is little information as to the existence of food taboos among the Hottentots in more recent times. The only well-authenticated instance is in the case of the hare, which in all the tribes might be eaten only by women and children, and was strictly forbidden to men 262
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¹ Op. cit., 100-3.

SEXUAL LIFE AND MARRIAGE 255

anyone who had not himself undergone the ceremony dare to intrude there.

The special animal slaughtered is brought into the hut and skinned there by the old woman attending on the couple. She must herself be a widow who has been remarried, and must further be no relative of either bride or bridegroom. No portion of the animal must leave the hut. A deep hole is made near the hearth fire, which has also become */nau*, and into this hole are thrown the contents of the stomach and the small intestines. Any blood spilled during the skinning must also drop into the hole, which is then filled up and must not be interfered with. The skin of the animal is given to the old woman for her own use; no one else would dare to use it. Once skinned, the animal is cut up, and every scrap of it then cooked, the heart, liver, and other internal organs together with the blood in one pot, the flesh in one or more other pots.

While the meat is cooking, the actual ceremony takes place. The old woman takes a knife (formerly a sharp piece of quartz would always have been used), and cuts both husband and wife first in front, two large gashes in the groin, one on each side, and afterwards behind, two gashes in the sacral region. With a small horn she then cups blood from these cuts, mixes it together, and adds some of the blood of the slaughtered animal. Next she scrapes some dirt from her arm and mixes it with the blood. Finally she rubs the mixture into all the cuts and bumps the two people together so that their blood mingles. They are then considered duly initiated into the ranks of the twice wed.

After this ceremony, the guests coming in to greet the couple give them beads or bracelets or other similar small gifts. The meat of the animal is now ready, and may be eaten by anyone who has previously undergone the same ceremony. Pregnant or menstruating women and their husbands may, however, not come into the hut, otherwise the efficacy of the cutting is lost; while if any unqualified person were to eat of the meat he would die.

Until the wounds are healed, the couple remain */nau*, and may not touch either water or the pots, nor go among the animals. The old woman remains to cook for them outside the hut. When at last the cuts have healed, the man and wife are ceremonially cleansed by the old woman. She smears a mixture of moist cowdung and */naop* (red mineral powder mixed with fat) all over their bodies, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off in handfuls.

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[386]

GIRLS' PUBERTY CEREMONIES

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The latter then gets her married sisters and her brothers' wives to make a little mat enclosure, *kharu oms*, inside at the back of the family hut, on the left hand side. This enclosure is a screened-off segment, measuring two to three feet across at its widest point, in the least regarded part of the hut; and it always has its own little opening leading out behind the hut. While it is being got ready the mother goes to fetch a woman who, though now past childbearing, has been renowned for her former fertility. This woman takes the girl on her back (whence she is known by the name *aba tards*), carries her into the *kharu oms*, and cares for her while she is there. Should the period come on in the veld far from home, the girl's companions will on no account let her walk, lest all the roots and berries in her path scorch up, but will do their best to carry her home on their backs, taking turn and turn about.

Once in the *kharu oms*, the girl must lie quite still, wrapped closely in her sheepskin kaross. The wind must on no account blow on her, nor must she be exposed to the sun. She may not leave her little hut except at night, and then it must be by the back opening, with one woman behind her and one in front to screen her from view. All the time she is thus secluded she must be careful not to touch cold water on any pretence whatever, nor may she speak above a whisper. It is said that if she talks aloud she will be a chatterbox and muddle in all sorts of affairs later, and will get a bad name among the people. The hearth fire in the outer hut is now also */nau*, and nothing at all may be cooked at it, nor may any pregnant or menstruating or sterile woman come and sit by it, lest dire misfortune befall the girl. No man or boy, again, will come near her, for fear of dread consequences to himself. It is believed that should anyone infringe these or any of the other */nau* restrictions during this time, some sort of sexual disease would beset him; and this could only be prevented from proving fatal if he were able to persuade the *aba tards* (the old woman officiating) to inoculate him with her "essence" and so free him.

The girl, however, is visited by her older girl friends, who grind sweet-smelling leaves and bark into powder for her, with which she is copiously covered. The time of her seclusion is variously reported as from two or three days to a month. Some girls who had recently been through the rites said they had been secluded for a fortnight; and Mrs. Hoernlé is inclined to think that most probably the time was longer in days gone by, for one of the chief things required of the girl while in her little hut is that she should get fat, with a smoothly shining skin.

1 [The girl's mother. — Analyst]

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881 Immediately she is in the hut, her relations commence slaughtering
 574 animals to provide in her honour the feast known as *kharu ʃap*,
 "menstruation killing." All her nearer relatives contribute to this
 killing, even her older married brothers, if she has any. Everything
 slaughtered must be female, and above all a heifer must be provided.
 The entrails, pluck, etc., of these animals must on no account be eaten
 by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl. The visiting
 friends enjoy them. This *kharu ʃap* is the great feast for the women,
 all who have already passed through the puberty rites being able to
 take part in it. The only exceptions to this rule are that no menstruating
 woman may eat of the meat, "lest the girl's period never stop," nor
 any pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return."
 No man or boy either was formerly supposed to take any part at
 all in the feast, but nowadays, owing to the extreme poverty of the
 people, males are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first
 animals killed. The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut,
 while the *aba tards* takes her share, always part of the outer flesh,
 inside. The girl and her friends remain in the *kharu oms*, drinking
 plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can. As the time of her
 seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions,
 [84] regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the
 [343] kraal begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male
 and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined.
 881 Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of
 783 purification rites takes place.

First, during the day, the *aba tards* enters the girl's enclosure, and
 cleanses her of all her *axa /uip*, child dirt. This is very thoroughly
 done with melted butter and moist cowdung, every inch of the girl's
 body being well scoured. The *aba tards* smears the salve all over the
 body of the girl, and after allowing it to dry slightly rolls it off again
 with the palm of her hand. She then collects it carefully, and hides it
 in an ant-heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is
 now given a complete set of new clothing, the old woman carrying
 off the discarded one. In former days it was at this time that the girl
 [29] changed her maiden's apron for the full woman's dress; hence these
 puberty rites are sometimes referred to as the *broek-kaross slag*,
 from the Dutch term *broek-kaross* (lit. breeches-kaross) applied to
 the woman's rear apron. Next the girl is led into the outer hut by
 the *aba tards*, with whom she prepares a meal for the other women
 assembled to meet her. Nowadays she prepares tea or coffee, but

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water. The *aba tards* then fills the girl's water-pot and her own, puts the former on the girl's head, and the procession returns home. The girl is now free to use water whenever she likes, except when she is menstruating.

In addition to this rite of reintroduction to water there is, according to Hahn, another rite to be performed before the girl is finally free from the restrictions imposed upon her. She must run about quite naked in the first thunderstorm coming on after her festival, so that the rain pours down and washes her whole body. The belief is that this causes her to be fruitful and have many children. He states that he has on three occasions witnessed this running in the rain, when the roaring of the thunder was deafening and the whole sky appeared to be one continual flash of lightning.¹

With these final rites of aggregation the ceremony is at an end. The girl is able once more to take part in the routine life of the community, only now she is regarded as ready for marriage. During her subsequent periods, however, she is again */nau*, and although there is apparently no feasting or special seclusion, she must observe the same injunctions as when she first menstruates. Thus she may not enter the cattle-fold, let alone milk; it is believed that if she does milk a cow, its milk will turn to blood. Similarly, if she cooks a meal, those who eat it, especially men, will be very ill. Above all she must avoid cold water, for, as Mrs. Hoernlé points out, there is this great difference between most things a menstruating woman is forbidden to do, and the touching of cold water—cold water she can never harm, it will always harm her, if she uses it when she should not, whereas it is she who pollutes other things that she touches and makes them */nau*. Mrs. Hoernlé records an instance of a woman dying suddenly, whose death was unhesitatingly attributed to the fact that she had her period, yet started to do her mistress's washing in cold water. Other women, again, who had been working for white people, said that they were now sickly and never bore any children, because they had been made to work with cold water when they should not have done so.²

Nowadays the Naman find it very inconvenient to have their women incapacitated so often and unable to attend to their daily tasks, and Mrs. Hoernlé goes on to say they have discovered that for most women it is quite safe to do these tasks, except that they must

¹ *Tausi-//Gom*, 87 (also quoted by Hoernlé); cf. Schinz, loc. cit.

² "Social Value of Water," 324-5.

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- 841 not touch cold water. It is only certain women who are said to be
784 /*khai* /*na*, forbidden or dangerous, who cannot do these things;
783 and a sure way of finding out is to take a woman along the seashore
[823] when first she menstruates. The sea, as the greatest accumulation of
cold water, is very dangerous for people in an unstable condition.
If the woman is /*khai* /*na*, it will rush in towards her, and she will have
to take great care not to be drawn in. The woman to whom this
happens must not dare to do anything during her period, for she would
be a danger to all who touched her food or the milk she had milked.¹

- 881 A similar discrimination is implied in Vedder's account of the
262 girls' puberty rites among the inland Naman. During her seclusion,
he says, the girl is given fresh cow's milk to drink. This milk must
come from a cow that has its first calf. If the cow does not die during
the days of the menstruation, or if it does not get ill, the girl is harmless.
But if it should die, this is proof that the girl possesses special powers,
and she dare not again drink milk from the herd during her period,
[784] lest she imperil the animals. The menstrual blood of such a girl, he
adds, is looked upon as an effective poison, which, when dry, is rubbed
from her clothes and mixed with the food of enemies in order to kill
[757] them. The blood of a harmless girl, on the other hand, is used as
medicine for sexual diseases amongst men.²

- 881 Of the girls' puberty rites among the other Hottentot peoples we
184 have no adequate description. That they existed, however, is shown
by Barrow's statement that although by his time many of the ancient
usages of the Cape and Eastern Hottentots had ceased to exist, "one
[302] custom still remained, which seemed to be pretty generally observed:
this was that of shaving the heads of young girls as soon as the first
[515] symptoms of maturity began to appear; at the same time, all the
ornaments worn on the neck, legs, and arms are removed, and the
body for once in their life clean washed and scoured; and during the
[262] continuance of the periodical symptoms, they are restricted to a milk
diet, and not suffered to mix in the company of men."³

- 841 Kolb, writing nearly a century earlier of the Cape Hottentots,
783 makes no mention at all of any special usages connected with a girl's
first period, but refers several times to the fact that menstruating
women were to avoid the company of men. A husband, for example,
might not have sexual intercourse with his wife during her periods,
or even eat with her, otherwise he would become unclean and have
to purify himself by slaughtering an ox for an *andersmachen* in which

¹ Ibid., 525.² "The Nama," 136.³ *Travels in S. Africa*, 2nd ed., I, 114.

Nama
Cape Hottentot
Gonaqua

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he took part with the other men of the kraal. Indeed, any man who touched a menstruating woman or anything belonging to her, or ate together with her or even came near her, was regarded as "extremely defiled", and obliged to purify himself before he could again mix freely with other men. It is to fear of such contamination, as we have seen, that Kolb ascribes the habitual separation of the sexes at meals.¹ Le Vailland, again, states that among the Gonaqua a menstruating woman would isolate herself at some distance from the rest of the community until her period was over, when, purified by bathing, she could again mix with the people.² These descriptions are obviously incomplete, but they serve to show that the conception of */nau* or taboo attaching to a menstruating woman among the Naman existed also to some degree at least, among the other Hottentot peoples.

BOYS' PUBERTY CEREMONIES

Although the Hottentots no longer observe any special rites connected with the attainment of maturity by boys, there is evidence enough in the literature that such rites existed in the past. Like the other Hottentot transition rites, they involved, among the Naman at least, a period of seclusion, with all its accompanying restrictions and final reintroduction to the incidents of ordinary life. But they also embodied a definite course of instruction, in which certain customary usages and laws peculiarly applicable to men were impressed upon the initiates. These rites seem to have been essentially of an individual character, in that as a rule only one boy at a time was subjected to them. On occasion perhaps three or four boys might be found undergoing them simultaneously, but this was by no means regular or necessary. In this respect among others, therefore, the Hottentot puberty rites for boys differed fundamentally from those of the North-Western Bushmen, where, as we have seen, there must always be a group of boys being initiated together.

No man was allowed to marry until he had passed through these rites. They served directly to initiate him into the ranks of mature men, and above all conferred upon him the privilege of habitually associating, eating, and smoking with these men. Boys who had not undergone the rites ate only with the women, and were regarded as milksops. It is upon this aspect of the rites that Kolb lays emphasis

¹ Op. cit., 102-3 and *passim*; cf. (English trans.) *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, 1, 247, 266-7.

² *Voyage dans l'Afrique*, II, 41.

759 the nature of the complaint. But there is nowhere any full statement as to who all the persons are who may respectively act in this way. The only mention of professional healers, apart from the "herbalists" referred to by Laidler, is Kolb's statement that in every Cape Hottentot kraal there was a man chosen by the old men of the kraal to act as physician and surgeon, because of his knowledge of herbs and surgical and medical treatment. His office was not hereditary. On his death the old men selected another man with similar qualifications; and if no one suitable could be found in their own kraal, they fetched him in from another. In the meantime such of the old women as had a knowledge of herbs and could make the surgical cuts undertook the treatment of the sick.¹ How far this statement can be regarded as accurate in all its details is difficult to say. The whole social aspect of medicine among the Hottentots has been somewhat ignored, and it is not always possible to reconcile the different statements as to the practitioners employed. Nor, except in the case of the *top* diseases, can we ascertain clearly how far the practitioners profess or are believed to cure all diseases, or whether they specialize on particular cases. And, apart from the account given by Mrs. Hoernlé, there is no full description of the ceremonies attaching to the cure or attempted cures.

757 On the actual methods of treatment adopted we have more adequate information, thanks mainly to the detailed descriptions given by Schultze and Laidler, as well as the older writers such as Graevenbroeck and Kolb.² Massage, as we have just seen, is widely used for diffuse pains attributed to the wanderings of the internal organs, the object being to restore each organ to its proper place. We have also previously noted its use in connection with pregnancy, and, according to Laidler, unfruitful women or those behind their time with menstruation are likewise massaged on the abdomen, in the former case with a downward, in the latter with a rolling movement.

[842
841] 752 The knowledge of surgery is limited.³ Dislocations are reduced by rubbing the joint briskly with fat and then moving the limb up and down vigorously. A broken limb is first wrapped in skin, care being taken to allow free circulation of the blood; then narrow splints of wood are tied round it to form a sort of sheath, and left until the bone is firm again. Amputation of the finger joint, a common practice 752 in the past, was cleverly performed with the aid of a ligature. Kolb 304

¹ Op. cit., 44-5.

² Schultze, op. cit., 211-14; 233-6; Laidler, op. cit., 424-36; Graevenbroeck, op. cit., 19 ff.; Kolb, op. cit., 148-51; cf. also Nolte, op. cit., 630-1.

³ Kolb, op. cit., 149-53; Schultze, op. cit., 211-14; Laidler, op. cit., 436-7.

neither must she speak above a whisper. All informers lay great emphasis on these two ⁸⁸¹ points. !Amatis declares that if she talks she will be a chatterbox and meddle in all sorts of affairs later on and will get a bad name among the people. The girl must not leave the hut except at night, and then it must be by the back opening with one woman behind and one in front of her, to screen her from view.

Nowadays her older girl friends visit her, but I am inclined to think that in the old ⁸⁸¹ days this would not have been allowed. They help her to grind sweet smelling bark or ³⁰² root or leaves to make powder (*sáp*) which is freely used on the clothes and to rub on the skin. The Hottentots have a great variety of scented powders, each with its own name, and in olden days some of the rarer ones were greatly sought after and exchanged for a considerable amount. When I went inland from Walfish Bay, I was entreated to send ^[314] back a special sweet smelling rosin which could be had from the people I was going among. These scented powders are used constantly, and a woman spends a considerable amount of her time grinding them. !Naop, a face paint made by grinding a soft red stone to powder and mixing it with fat, is used by the girls to paint patterns on their faces. The ^[314] time during which the girl must remain in the *khard óne* has been differently reported to me. It varies from 2 or 3 days to a month. Hottentots are vague about length of time, but several girls who had been through the experience recently, told me they were in the hut a fortnight. Most probably the time was longer in days gone by, for one of the chief things required of a girl in the hut is that she should get fat, with smoothly shining skin. "The girl mustn't be hungry while she is sitting in the hut," says !Amatis. Indeed, immediately she is in the hut, her relatives kill for her, the feast being called *khari* ^{sáp}. All her nearer relatives take part in this killing, even the girl's elder married brothers if she has any. Everything killed must be female, and chief of all must be a heifer. The entrails, pluck, etc., must not on any account be eaten by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl — the visiting friends enjoy them.

This *khari* ^{sáp} is the great feast for the women, all who have already passed through these ceremonies being able to take part in it. No man or boy is allowed to have any share in it at all. One woman of the Berseba tribe said to me: "That killing is as great as the marriage killing." Nowadays the Hottentots are exceedingly poor, and cannot afford to kill recklessly as they did of old, hence the men, who formerly took part only in the feast of rejoicing ¹² to be described below, are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first animals killed, and this concession is made use of to force the boys to submit to a part of the proceedings ¹² to which they would not nowadays be willing to submit otherwise. The only exceptions to this rule that all grown women may partake ^[341] of the meat are that no menstruating woman must eat of it, "lest the girl's period never ^{843]}

¹² Vide infra, p. 72, and n. 12.¹² Vide infra, p. 72.

stop," as Katrina says, and no pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to re-
turn." The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, while the *abá taris* takes
her share, which must always be part of the outer flesh, inside. While the girl and her
friends sit in the *khárd óma*, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can,
the fire which is always made in the centre line of the hut, just a little way inside the door,
is *inau* and nothing must be cooked at this fire at all. Everyone must *karuin* for the
girl. Thus no pregnant or menstruating woman must come and sit by the fire, nor must
a sterile woman, lest dire things befall the girl in the *khárd óma*. All this time too, she
will be careful not to touch cold water on any pretense whatever. No man or boy would
come near her for fear of dread consequences to himself.

As the time of the girl's seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger pro-
portions, regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the village
begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male and female, play and
dance round the hut in which she is confined. Then, at last, the day before she is to come
out, a long series of purification rites takes place.

First, during the day, the girl is placed in front of the *inau* fire, and is cleaned¹ with
moist cow dung (*shoup*) and *inaup* from head to foot by the old woman who carried her
into the hut, to clean off all the *áya /wrip*.² The *abá taris* mends the *shoup* all over the
body of the girl, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off
in handfuls, *shoup* and */wrip*, for the Hottentots allow plenty of it to gather. She then
collects it carefully and hides it in an ant heap or animal's hole when no one is look-
ing. The girl is then given a complete new set of clothing and the old woman carries off
the old one. Meantime a ewe has been slaughtered, and one of the hind legs is given to
the *abá taris*. This she must now cook on the fire in the house, the first cooking done
there since the girl entered the *khárd óma*. When the meat is cooked, it is eaten by the
abá taris and other women who, like her, are past childbearing. No one else touches it.
Then the *abá taris* takes the fire, ashes and all, and dumps it far from the house. She
then sprinkles fresh sand on the hearth and lays a new fire. This fire must not be lit from
another fire, as is usually done when a fire goes out. It must be lit with flint. Most
Hottentots use tinder boxes nowadays, matches being a rare luxury. No doubt originally
the fire was lighted with the firesticks which were certainly in use among them.³ The fire
thus lit is now no longer *inau*. *Nomá óma ho shou⁴, wáke tui wá wá shou⁵* ("now the

¹ //Áya shou, "the cleansing before going out".

² Literally "boy dirt".

³ Cf. T. Hahn, *Tami-//Ganc*, p. 77.

⁴ *shou*, "fire" or "light", e. g., *shou shou* "the right path".

843 they frequently massage her. During the last months before the birth the young woman generally goes back to her mother. The older relatives of the mother function as midwives and are by no means inefficient. By rising too soon, however, 846 the mother unfortunately exposes herself to danger and diseases among women are consequently not unusual. The 851 christening lies in the hands of the father. In olden days 551 every child received a Nama name reminiscent of the circumstances just antecedent or subsequent to the birth, but the 843 Christian Nama have given up this custom, and Biblical and 642 European names are very general lately. The midwife who assists at the birth often gets a present which consists of two goats when a boy is born; when a girl is born, this is reduced by half.

857 5. It is held that the adolescent girl will very soon be a help to her mother, and boys have to look after the herds from 871 their very early youth. In this matter the school has to fight many a fight with the parents, who do not realise that, in order to make progress, the child has to attend classes regularly. The mother always regards it as more proper to employ the girl at home, and when a goat is lost, it is much more important to send the boy into the pastures to look for it than that he should attend school. But a change has taken place in this respect and the Nama now learn to understand that a regular attendance at class will be of importance to the child in later years.

841 6. When at the age of 12-14 years the first menstruation sets in with adolescent girls, the whole family celebrates the occasion. In a corner of the hut which is separated from the rest of the room by means of a curtain, the girl is isolated and adorned with all sorts of ornaments by the feminine members of the family. A festival day is appointed, and in families where old customs are still adhered to the girl is given fresh cow-milk to drink. The milk must come from a cow that has its first calf. If this cow does not die during the days of the menstruation or if she does not get ill, the girl is harmless. But if the cow should die it is proof that 714 this girl possesses special powers, and she dare not drink milk from the herd again during the days of menstruation lest she imperil the herd.

714 Her menstrual blood is looked upon as effective poison which, when dry, they rub from the clothes and mix with 715 hated people's food in order to kill them. The blood of the harmless girl on the other hand is used as medicine for sexual diseases amongst men.

513 7. The brothers and sisters call one another by their names. 576 The parents are also accustomed to calling their children by their names unless they prefer to call the little sucklings "Little Father" or "Little Mother." But children are not allowed to call their parents or their parents' elderly relatives

by their names. In their communications they have titles of honour in accordance with the degree of relationship. 593
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It might be mentioned here that the missionaries have succeeded in introducing family names which were unknown to the Nama before. These family names are derived from the Nama language, the heathen names of the grandfathers and great-grandfathers being changed into the family names of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Only the Ovambo tribes have family names which were given to them by their masters in the Cape, e.g., Teapot, Vlermois, Afrikaner, etc., etc. 551

8. Their old national dress is very seldom worn. It consisted of home-dressed skins which were worn as aprons in front and at the back with a leather belt; and a large skin which served as a cloak and blanket and, twisted over the right shoulder and underneath the left arm, served as a bag for the gathering of wild-hoe. 291

At present both men and women go clad in European clothes. Coloured designs are preferred. While the Herero women have clung to the mode of dress introduced by the wives of missionaries 60 years ago, the Nama has not adopted any permanent national dress for the women and girls. 177

9. Instead of the old anointing of the body with fat, they have resorted to cleaning themselves with water and soap. although everywhere Nama, who regard the application of soap and water as detrimental to health, are still to be found. 302
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The habit of the women to powder their bodies with "bucku" which they make for themselves by powdering a great variety of shrubs and roots, is still in vogue to-day and there are still women who hideously paint their faces with a blackish red salve during the period of menstruation, or early pregnancy and on cold winter days. 341
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10. The Nama is not miserly or avaricious. What he has in the form of food or other means of enjoyment he shares in the first place with his family and also with strangers. 574

To smoke alone or to eat a piece of bread which has been obtained accidentally is regarded as very unbecoming. Servants who labour for Europeans and receive their food there are wont to carry part of a special tit-bit home to share it with their people, unless the master, not knowing the Nama custom, should demand that all be eaten before his eyes so that his servants, for whom it is intended, may have the benefit of it and not strangers. 576

11. The Nama is decidedly inclined to sociability. It is his wont to squat or sit on a low chair near the fireside at night and to tell to the last details and discuss the news of the day; nor do they separate till very late in the night. The Christians like sitting round the fire at night untiringly singing their songs and hymns. They still take great pleasure in the Reed-dance on bright moonlight nights. On 571
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three years between each group, the members of which call each other "mates." When these children attain the age of puberty, they are no longer children, but neither are they as yet full members of the tribe, nor fully grown up, and so for a period more or less prolonged they belong nowhere and are removed from the solidarity and security of their former position. They are in a state of great instability, exposed to dangers of all kinds, and unless they take the greatest care, and follow scrupulously the course of behaviour prescribed for them by their elders, sickness, if not death, will overtake them; but finally they are received into the stratum of the fully grown, and they are then once more secure. Again, people who are married form a definite group, divided, of course, into younger and older married people. If the mate of one of these people dies, the survivor can no longer belong to the group of the married, but must be received into the group of the widowed, and until the full ceremony has been performed, this person, too, is in a precarious position, and is subject to all kinds of restrictions. Should he or she later on re-marry, they must be received into still another group, that of the twice-wed. But, even within any one group one is liable to be cut off from the full activity of its life, and so from enjoying the full measure of its protection, and at such times, too, life becomes precarious and full of restrictions. Thus, a woman after childbirth is withdrawn from her usual life and must be purified and received once more into her group. So, too, in former days was a girl during her period. Disease, again, removes a man from social life, and he, too, must be cleansed before he can take it up again, and until that is done he must exercise great care. Certain diseases are best cured by the patient being made a member of the group of those who have had it and recovered. The worse a person has had a disease from which he has recovered, the more likely is he to be able to give protection and cure to others. The thing to do, then, is to get oneself inoculated by such a man with his essence, that is, with some of his body-dirt, and so become imbued with his immunity. During this process, again, great care must be exercised.

Now, in all the cases I have instanced, the person whose social equilibrium is, so to speak, unstable, is in great danger from water, and must not on any account touch it. It will be sufficient to give a description of one type of case, for the procedure is the same in all.

When a girl gets her first period, when she is said to Khari, she is at once cut off from the ordinary life of the Kruak, is confined in a small dark hut, built inside her mother's, and must lie there quite still, wrapped closely in her sheepskin blanket, not daring even to speak above a whisper. She is, however, visited by her friends, who grind sweet smelling leaves and bark into powder for her, and with this powder, or bushes, she is copiously covered. All the time she is in this hut she must not touch cold water, and must be protected in many other

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ways, which it is not necessary to mention here. When she is ready to come out, a matron, who has been a successful married woman, with many children whom she has reared, but who is now past the child-bearing age, and who has taken charge of the girl all through her seclusion at the invitation of the mother, enters her hut, cleanses the girl of all her Axa-wrip, her child dirt. This is very thoroughly done, as I have myself seen, with melted butter and wet cow-dung, every inch of the girl's body being well scoured. The girl is then given a complete set of new clothing, and is led into the outer hut by the matron with whom she prepares a meal for the other women assembled to receive her. Nowadays, it is tea or coffee she prepares,

formerly it was meat slaughtered for the occasion. The matron must hold her hand as she takes the pot, and aid her with each thing she does. Soot from the pot is put on her forehead, and together the old woman and she eat a piece of meat prepared apart from the rest. So she is made free to cook and prepare a meal once more. Similarly, she must be reintroduced to all her daily tasks by the old woman. They milk together, gather wood together, collect roots and berries. Towards evening, when the usual time comes for getting the household supply of water, she goes accompanied by all the old women, the matron in charge of her walking just in front of her, another old woman behind, as they move along in single file. Arrived at the water, the matron takes wet mud from the water, rubs it on the girl's legs, and then she takes a branch and splashes the water over the girl. Finally, both of them take hold of the branch and strike the water. The matron then fills the girl's bucket and her own, puts one on the girl's head, and then the procession returns home. After this the girl is perfectly free to use water whenever she likes, except when she has her period. Nothing is said, so far as I know, when the girl is reintroduced to water, but when a widow is similarly splashed all over the old woman says: "Gara dama gôre jhaba jhabare" (Don't get thin, get fat, fat as the jhaba tuber). In the case of a woman with a baby, it will be the older woman who have looked after her who will free her from all her restrictions. In the case of a person with some disease, it will be the inoculator who will do it, but always the procedure is the same, so far as the water is concerned. When I was in Windhoek, this last Christmas, a woman died on a neighbouring farm, but was brought in to be buried by her friends in the location. What the real cause of death was I do not know for certain; it may have been heart failure, as it was very sudden. The natives' account is quite definite. The woman had her period, yet started to do her mistress's washing in cold water. She just died on the spot! Several other instances I got in Franzfontein from women who had been working for

* Jhaba is *Ficaria verna*, Schltz., an Aconitoid with a large tuber. 95 per cent of the weight is made up by a thin milky juice. The tuber is eaten raw. Jhaba Jhaba is a verb formed by reduplication from this noun.

white people and who told me that they were now sickly, and never got any children, because they had been made to work with cold water, when they should not have done so.

The sea as the greatest accumulation of cold water is very dangerous for people in an unstable condition. I was given a very graphic description of a tragedy that occurred not so very long ago. Three young girls were walking along the beach at Swakopmund very happily and merrily, when all of a sudden the sea became angry and seemed to be on top of them. Two of the girls calling out, "Who here has her period?" rushed up the beach in safety, the third just had time to shout out, "I have," when she was dragged under by the waves and drowned! The woman who told me this lives inland from Walvis Bay. The other woman who had been with her was afterwards my cook far north in Fransfontein, and she confirmed the story of the drowning. In these degenerate days, the Naman find it very inconvenient to have their women incapacitated, so often and unable to attend to their daily tasks, and they have discovered that for most women it is quite safe to do these tasks, only they must not touch cold water. It is only certain women who are said to be 'Khai 'na, forbidden or dangerous, who cannot do these things, and a sure way of finding out is to take a woman along the seashore when first she kharus. If she is 'Khai 'na, the sea will rush out towards her, and she will have to take great care not to be drawn in. The woman to whom this happens must not dare to do anything during her period, for she would be a danger to all who touched her food, or the milk she had milked. For there is this great difference between most things a woman is forbidden to do, and the touching of cold water. Cold water she can never harm, it will always harm her, be she 'Khai 'na or not, if she uses it when she should not, whereas it is she who pollutes other things that she touches and makes them 'nou, taboo. Thus, if a girl should kharu cut in the veld when she and her companions are gathering roots and berries, her companions must turn by turn to carry her back to the kral, for if she walks among the bushes she will scorch them, the succulent roots will shrivel up, and the leaves wither from the bushes. If she milks a cow, its milk will turn to blood. (I am told that a cow does sometimes give a reddish fluid instead of milk.) If she cooks a meal those who eat it, especially men, will be very ill. Always after a girl has been reintroduced to the water, she and the old woman take a branch which they dip into a bucket of water and scatter it over the whole kral, bushes, pens, sheep, goats and cattle.

We have dealt now with the cases in which water is a protection against dangers, and with those in which water itself is dangerous. There are just two other little rites connected with water which seem to me a little different.

Both in Walvis Bay and in Fransfontein I was told that babies are taken out into the first rainstorm which occurs after they are in a position to be removed from the hut, that is, after

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MASSAGE.

757 Where pain was felt, fat was rubbed in. If this was
 755 unsuccessful, then the doctor performed passes over the part
 with his hands, and then let drop a piece of wood from the
 nose and asserted that it was out of the patient's flesh.
 (Campbell.) Plasters of fat were applied from a freshly killed
 animal, and motions made with the hands over the plaster, so
 that medicine was combined with magic. Should that fail, then
 incisions were made. Massage was, and still is, in common
 • [P41] use, and is called P/kourae. When women are behind their
 time with menstruation a rolling movement of the hand on the
 stomach is the correct method of treatment, and presumably it
 was a loosening motion. For pains and sprains, punching,
 kneading, and rolling are employed. P/koo is the transference
 [P42] of heat from a fire to the part affected by the intermediation
 of the hand, which is warmed and applied gently. In the case
 of the unfruitful woman, she is massaged downwards on the
 abdomen. If this does not produce the desired effect, then the
 P/gai aup may be consulted, and he may do the rubbing.

SURGERY.

752 The Hottentots' knowledge of surgery was limited. They
 successfully reduced dislocations. The joint was rubbed briskly
 with fat and the limb then moved briskly up and down. For
 example, a dislocation of the right shoulder would be reduced
 by gripping the patient's hand as though about to shake, and
 then vigorously pulling him towards and then pushing him away
 from one. Campbell says that they tied splinters of wood
 around broken limbs and left them until the bone was firm
 again.

Amputation of a finger joint was common and possibly led
 to experiments upon larger limbs. Kolben states that the head
 of the joint of the finger was tied up with sinew, and then
 [P78] cut through below. To the raw surface, leaves of myrrh and
 sweet herbs were applied and tied on. He suggests that this
 method was used for the removal of larger limbs, and a skeleton
 found near Garies showed that a limb might be removed or
 lost and the patient live for at least a while afterwards. Our
 old Nama woman stated that the "old people," when a leg
 was badly broken, amputated it through the knee joint after
 tying a thong tightly around the lower end of the thigh. It
 is common knowledge that the native is an expert at disjuncting
 any animal. The operation of gelding animals, especially bull
 232 calves, was in daily use and was performed by bruising the
 142 testicles between two stones. The monorchism, so frequently
 referred to by early travellers when writing of the Hottentot,
 was doubtless the application of the same method to male babies
 with the intention of reducing the number of twins born
 —once again a sympathetic reason.

affection, or gratitude inspired by each. By this constant round of varied pleasures his appetite is freshly whetted. A disobedient wife he beats, one whose badness is beyond reform he puts away.

If a woman bear a live male, the father makes her a present of a cow that is with calf, and the mother is instructed to rear the boy on her own milk and that of the beast; and he brings him up with due care, and sees to it that his property increases. If a woman bear a daughter, the husband gives the same commands to her as when acknowledging a son; but when the child is strong enough to be able of its own accord and unaided to allay its thirst from a vessel with milk, water, or beer, he forthwith joins the cow which he gave for the nourishment of his daughter, together with its calf, to the rest of his herd.⁶⁷ The women lead a hard, rough life which produces barrenness; they are scarcely adolescent before they are effete. This is in my judgment the reason for the smallness of the population.

They worship the sun and value it highly as the author of all good. The moon they despise. They call the sun sore, the moon *cha*, the latter being also their word for dung. It seems as if they imputed to the moon all diseases of men and beasts, the inclemency of the sky, and the prevalence of disasters of every kind.⁶⁸ When the moon is full, women who are in their monthly courses blame it for their illness.

[The women stand up and part their legs to make water; the men bend their knees and almost touch their ankles with their hands. Neither sex breaks wind or belches. They express their disgust pretty sharply, and not without excuse, when they meet this fault in Europeans.⁶⁹] They also condemn with scorn and biting ridicule the precious necklaces of the Europeans, strung with a needle on a slender thread, bought for a greater price than the largest flocks of sheep, and having no other use, convenience, or value than that fictitious one that luxury provides. Yet they themselves sometimes banish or avert diseases by the power of entrails and intestines which they hang round their necks, and by the fat of slaughtered beasts, remedies greatly scoffed at by our countrymen.

⁶⁷) On the Hottentot beliefs relating to the sun and the moon, see above, pp. 118, 141. (The Naman use the terms *sores* for the sun, and *//kash* for the moon; and so do the Koranna, so that G. is obviously referring to the Hottentots. He is wrong, however, in stating that the same word is used for "dung" as for "moon." The former, in Nama, is *rosh*.)

⁶⁹) The passages within square brackets are omitted by van Oordt in his Dutch translation of G.'s MS.